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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 000959

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [IS](#) [KPAL](#) [PREL](#) [GOI](#) [EXTERNAL](#)

SUBJECT: (C) APPOINTMENT OF NEW UN SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE
MIDDLE EAST: SERRY LOBBYING ISRAEL AND PALESTINIANS

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel C. Kurtzer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Dutch NATO Permanent Representative Robert Serry told the Ambassador February 17 that he is meeting with Israeli and Palestinian Authority officials to lobby for his candidacy to become the new UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East. Serry said that the Palestinian leadership had expressed strong support for his candidacy and told him that they favored him over Canada's Jill Sinclair. He said the Palestinians were expected to convey their support for his candidacy to UN Secretary General Annan.

2. (C) Serry said that he will tell Israeli officials, with whom he is meeting later today, that he brings extensive experience and personal integrity to the job. He believes the Israelis are comfortable with his candidacy, but he does not know where he stands in their ranking order of potential successors to Terje Larsen.

3. (C) Serry expects to be in New York in the next few weeks, and the Dutch PermRep to the UN has told him that he is trying to arrange an introductory call on Annan. Serry said he remains ready to come to Washington to meet with USG officials, but has understood that it may be best not to do so. He said he remains very interested in the position and believes that he would work well with the US in the Quartet to advance the prospects for Middle East peace.

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KURTZER